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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PINR](#) [PGOV](#) [TU](#)

SUBJECT: TURKEY: MORE FALLOUT FROM AK PARTY CONVENTION

REF: ANKARA 6447

(C) Classified by Deputy Political Counselor Charles O. Blaha. Reason: 1.5 (b,d).

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: As noted reftel, PM Erdogan emerged from the Oct. 12 AK Party convention more firmly in control of the party's administration. In changing almost half of the AK's fifty-member Central Decision-Making and Administrative Board (MKYK), Erdogan has provided some clues as to who in the party is on the rise and who may be losing influence. Our contacts maintain that the changes reflect Erdogan's efforts to promote a pragmatic decision-making team. End Summary.

Stars On the Rise

[1](#)2. (C) In the aftermath of the AK Party convention Oct. 12, our AK contacts say that Justice Minister and GOT Spokesman Cemil Cicek is now in a stronger position within the party. Erdogan appointed Cicek as the convention's director of events (Divan Baskani), a position that allowed Cicek to administer the convention in its entirety. It also afforded Cicek the opportunity to make the only speech that came after Erdogan's acceptance speech, which our contacts say is an indication of Erdogan's confidence in Cicek.

[1](#)3. (C) AK M.P. Omer Celik won a seat on the Central Decision-Making and Administrative Board (MKYK). Celik is a long-time close advisor to Erdogan and occasionally drafts speeches for the PM. In an Oct. 16 meeting, a well-placed AK official in Istanbul municipality who has known Erdogan for years described Celik as "Erdogan's man" and someone who shares the PM's vision. The AK official asserted that Celik's appointment reflects Erdogan's desire for pragmatism in the AK administration. One AK deputy who is an independent thinker and who has provided reliable insight in the past explained to us recently that Erdogan is seeking people -- like Celik -- who can offer a variety of opinions and can discuss those opinions openly without resorting to rhetorical brinkmanship, as was the case with former Deputy PM Yalcinbayir.

Falling Stars?

[1](#)4. (C) Our contacts also note that several well-known AK figures clearly came away losers, including Deputy PM and FM Gul, who seemed somber throughout the convention. Originally, our contacts say that Gul had been slated to preside over the convention. However, Erdogan did not want to give Gul (long considered a rival to the PM) the spotlight and the opportunity to address the party delegates. Our contacts also claim that Gul has not been involved in AK's internal affairs for some time now.

[1](#)5. (C) Reftel noted that DefMin Vecdi Gonul was left out of the MKYK largely because the DefMin did not have the time to devote to business. However, a journalist with close ties to AK told us Oct. 15 that Erdogan believes Gonul is too close to the military. The journalist argued that while Erdogan, in one sense, sees this as a liability, the PM may be planning to appoint Gonul Education Minister down the road (Note: Many of our AK contacts tell us that Erdogan is planning a cabinet shuffle around the new year. Despite his apparent diminished position within the party, Gonul would remain DefMin until a shuffle. End Note). In appointing Gonul, who is seen as someone with whom the military can work, as Education Minister, Erdogan hopes to mollify the military's concerns about AK's education reform proposals, which AK plans to pursue slowly over the next few months.

16. (C) Also notable among the apparent losers, according to our contacts, is AK M.P. Egemen Bagis, who was left off the MKYK. Bagis frequently serves as Erdogan's interpreter in meetings with English-speakers and describes himself as the PM's foreign policy advisor. He also serves as Chairman of Parliament's Turkish-US Friendship Group.

EDELMAN